

It's a Strenuous Life, the Life of the Rookies, But Here's a Cheering Word to the "Folks at Home"

By Charles A. Grimes, Staff Correspondent

The writer of this article is one of the six members of The News-Times editorial staff now in Uncle Sam's army. All have been kept so thoroughly busy learning soldiery that little time has been spared them to write of their experiences. Mr. Grimes, however, is in the quartermaster's corps and he has at last found time to do "a little writing." His first article deals with the rookies' first experiences following his enlistment through Serjt. Skees at the local office.—Editor's note.

By CHARLES A. GRIMES.

AN AMERICAN CONCENTRATION CAMP, July 28.—What happens to Johnnie when he leaves South Bend?

Mother worries, dad reasons, big sister surmises, little brother guesses and "deary" imagines (if Johnnie has a "deary") what Johnnie's lot will be now that he has left his happy domain, perhaps for the first time in his life, to enter the army. They all undoubtedly know why he went—that irrepresible red-bloodedness in him could not be cooled; and so, with the 500 or more other volunteers from South Bend he answered quickly the call to the colors.

It is natural for mother to worry. But, she should not forget that her Johnnie has nine perfectly good chances in every 10 to be marching safely home to her after the treaty for peace has been signed. Should dad be an old soldier he can picture for himself in part the trials and triumphs Johnnie will encounter.

"Sis" will be tempted to believe that Johnnie will need a whole lot of correcting after getting out of the "horrid" army. She should not be impetuous. After Wilhelm has abdicated, Johnnie may surprise her on his return home.

The youthful brother can of course picture nothing but the heroic actions of his idol who will shortly be shooting Germans in a sort of true wild west fashion. Whoops! but won't Johnnie's gun make a great "air rifle" when he brings it back home.

And "deary!" Pity the poor girl friend Johnnie left behind him. She fancies Johnnie will have to hold a stiff upper lip or succumb to the wiles of some fair French mademoiselle. She knows too, that the south-eastern belle, near whom Johnnie will most likely get most of his training, can be winsome, very winsome when they so desire. But fear not Miss South Bend. There's a cure for every ill. Just keep writing to that faraway soldier boy and remember that he is still possessed as of yore, of that longing and liking for "goodies."

OFF FOR FORT WAYNE.

Johnnie was accepted at the recruiting station on Michigan st. You know the place. A day or two later you kissed him and bade him Godspeed as he left for Fort Wayne.

That trip to Fort Wayne! Ah! yes, it was lonesome, but it was novel, taking the first lap in a course, the length of which was then and is still quite undetermined. Getting acquainted with other Fort Wayne-bound rookies wasn't difficult.

The second physical examination at Fort Wayne took place immediately after arrival. "Fort Thomas, Ky., is your destination," the genial recruiting Serjt. Ryan told Johnnie and his new acquaintances. The newly congregated rookies took the information with considerable satisfaction, for Fort Thomas and South Bend are closely linked these trying war days. Every tent, every cantonment, every barrack shelters rookies or regulars who boast of homes or friends in South Bend.

Rattling cars on speeding trains are not conducive to sleep, consequently Johnnie's disturbing dreams of von Hindenburg and Springfield park were rudely interrupted more than once on the trip from Fort Wayne to Cincinnati. A comfortable daycoach hustled Johnnie and his 24 rookie pals out of Fort Wayne and into the "city of pork." Twenty-five tired, sleepy and worn youths left the "special" in the early morning after the train pulled into Cincinnati.

Shortly after arriving an army orderly put Johnnie, rookies, baggage and all aboard a Fort Thomas bound car for the beautiful eight mile trip to the receiving station.

A WELCOME SIGHT.

Fort Thomas at last burst through the trees, a pretty sight and a not uninviting destination for Johnnie. The fort is superbly situated on a bluff overlooking the Ohio river. Across from it on the Ohio side, is Cincinnati's leading summer resort, fashioned and named after New York's great amusement city, Coney Island.

Most of the permanent buildings at the fort are of red brick. They "looked good" to Johnnie much better in fact than he had been expecting. The receiving station is not as large or as impressive as stations at most other recruiting points, but the aggressive officials make up for the lack of beauty of the building by tending affairs, strictly to business. They lost no time setting Johnnie and his pals checked up.

Then, Johnnie passed into the official "sizer-up." The "sizer-up" he it known, is the orderly who looks

at the recruit as he comes in and determines without measurements—entirely by estimates—what size shirt, breeches, underwear, socks, shoes and hat are to be issued to the new soldier. And he it known further, that that official's estimates are almost always very accurate.

Johnnie's next experience was along sanitary lines. In other words, he was handed a towel and a cake of soap and ordered to get under the showers. Cold water fell hard, so to speak, on some of the rookies, but Johnnie evidently liked it, for he hastened back to the receiving station smiling, to await the next order of the day.

MESS CALL COMES.

Dinner came next!

"Get your mess kits out this way," came the cheerful, cheering and most welcome words. Straight-forward and not a bit abashed Johnnie marched out to the supply room where he was handed a galvanized mess kit, a cup, knife, fork and spoon. Such a combination! The army doesn't furnish sterling silverware for soldiers' use in mess halls. Far be the "tools" the young soldier gets from delicate knives, forks or china-ware. Rather, the mess kits are more disappointing to the aesthetic tastes and hopes of many Johnnies. Galvanized plates and cups are not exactly like those at home but they fill the bill just the same.

However, a hungry youth seldom hesitates. Johnnie did not. He stepped to the front of the line in which hundreds of other Johnnies were waiting for the doors of the mess hall to open. After a few moments, the mess sergeant threw open the door and the line commenced to move, Johnnie with it. He held out his pan for potatoes, peas, a piece of meat and two slices of bread and caught them all on the fly. Inaccurate catches down at Fort Thomas are to be pitied, for the army cooks delight in seeking how fast they can dish out the "chow" as the rookies pass them by. It's a case of his or spill when the coffee is poured. If Johnnie didn't drink coffee, and had the necessary wherewithal he got a bottle of milk for a nickel. Otherwise he drank water.

Getting the meal is one problem at the recruiting station. Eating is quite another. Johnnie was at the fort before the mess halls were completed. As a consequence he got his dinner inside the mess hall where the veterans and cooks were in command, but was obliged to seek a spot out on the sidewalk or barracks steps before he could conveniently store the meal away. A sidewalk is hardly a suitable dining table, especially

when the dust is blowing. Yet, who in the army cares for a little dust? And if the rain falls, so much more coffee for the soldier. Soldiers, like ducks, seem to like the rain at times.

EATING "OFF THE GROUND."

Eating out in the open went hard with two or three of the newly arrived rookies. Their first meal in the army, judging from general appearances, was not entirely enjoyed. One hungry out dissatisfied youth, looked at the spread and condescendingly handed it over to a less genteel companion. Another waited that Uncle Sam ought to furnish better dining quarters. A third whose Mississippi drill amused Johnnie and his friends, remarked: "Ah! mighty glad mother can't see me down here, for Ah reckon she sure would be disappointed to see me eating off the ground." His were the sentiments, if not the words, of the majority of his fellow recruits.

Since Johnnie's first day at Fort Thomas, "chow" has changed. There is no more eating on the sidewalks or barracks steps, for a dozen commodious mess halls have been erected. Dust as a seasoning for potatoes and rain as a substitute for cream in coffee are "joys" of the past. The recruits now line up at mess call, move in an orderly line to the main dining hall, get their "chow" and then proceed to dispose of it in their respective company mess halls.

Dinner over, Johnnie lined up again. This time, however, not for a meal, but for physical examination. An orderly, widely known about the post as "Mike," took charge of the rookies. Just as most big cities wish the chief of police job on an Irishman, so do most army detachments and companies wish the orderly job on an Irishman's brother. Indeed, a detachment without a "Mike" or a "Timothy" as orderly would be like South Bend without a west end.

What happened to Johnnie after Mike turned him and his pals over to the doctors for examination matters little. Suffice it to note that Johnnie was a tired boy when Dr. Bacon, an army surgeon, who was formerly of Mishawaka, announced that Johnnie and his pals had successfully met all physical requirements.

The mustering officer without delay read the entire enlistment record to the recruits. All raised up their right hands and swore to honor and defend America and her flag for seven years or until mustered out of the army.

A soldier! was Johnnie from then, and thereon.

CAUTION AGAINST DISEASE.

He hastened to the record room, signed the en-

listment papers and had his finger prints taken. While there he was vaccinated and was inoculated the first time for the prevention of typhoid. Every soldier in the army received three inoculations on enlistment and is given three more before leaving for foreign service. Ordinarily there is a lapse of 10 days between inoculations. Once in a great while some of the men become really sick as a result of the treatment—once every inoculation half of the men imagine the serum has made them ill, whereas in reality they are as well as any mortals could wish to be.

Johnnie was a soldier now. To the veteran it may seem that anyone lacking training and equipment couldn't have been a warrior in the making even, but Johnnie thought different. He returned radiantly happy to the receiving station from the examination, only to be still further advanced in the ranks, as he imagined, by being assigned with 50 or more companions to temporary quarters in one of the camp barracks.

Before getting to his bunk he received two army blankets, a mess kit for personal use, and a complete recruit outfit. Every recruit receives one of the outfit on enlisting, and every recruit, it appears, is as anxious as his neighbor to see the contents immediately. The outfit consists of toilet soap, a razor, a shaving brush, a comb, a hair brush, a shoe brush, two face towels, a box of shoe polish, a tooth brush and a "housewife." This latter very handy, much used and seldom abused article, contains thread, needles, buttons and scissors, all of which are invaluable to the boy in khaki. A sister or mother being not available to sew on a button or "take a stitch in time," a "housewife" is the soldier's next best friend.

And thus, Johnnie has spent his first full day away from South Bend. It was a strenuous day. After supper someone of the rookies commenced singing "I Got the Homesickness Blues." The tune did not prove popular. Someone else started "Honolulu, America Loves You." Another of the soldiers-to-be followed with "On the Beach at Waikiki," and other melodies of the day. And so the singing continued. Finally, after a short vocal evening someone in a far-off corner was carrying a fast ebullient strain of the "Old Kentucky Home," and twilight was no more, as Johnnie dropped into peaceful slumber.

Dreams of the morrow, of his first appearance in a uniform and of active service ere long, all were his in the sound sleep that followed.

Third Year of War Sees Allies Situation Improve Despite the Fall of Roumania

NEW YORK, July 28.—Germany's situation at the end of three years of war appears less favorable than it did either one year ago or two years ago.

She has to her credit in the last twelvemonth the crushing of ill-prepared Roumania and the conquest of two-thirds of that nation's territory.

But in the principle theater of war, the west, east and Italian fronts, the entente allies have shown, on the whole, a decided superiority to the central powers.

In the materials of war the nations fighting for democracy clearly have an increasing advantage over the kaiser's legions. They have dealt the enemy blow after blow which have told heavily in lives, if not in territory.

GERMANY MORE DESPERATE.

Germany's plight is rendered more desperate than it was on Aug. 1, 1916, by the accession of the United States and several minor peoples to the ranks of her enemies. Almost the whole world is lined up against that nation, which, boasting itself intrinsically better than all others, set out to become a second Rome.

Every belligerent dreads another winter of war, but Germany most of all. She lacks many things to face the rigors of a cold campaign—not only shells and guns, but wool for warm clothing and sufficient coal to run her rapidly dosed at home comfortably warm, not to speak of the famine in the food fats so necessary to those facing zero weather.

Looking back on the long truce of the spring on the eastern front, it is hard to realize that the Russians just one year ago were in the midst of a splendid offensive much like that which has surprised the world in the present month. In the 1916 drive Brusiloff pushed far within Bukovina and Galicia and crossed the borders of Hungary. He took about 350,000 prisoners, mostly Austrians, and forced the enemy to concentrate masses of reliable German troops, aided by a few Turks, to check him.

RUSSIA A YEAR AGO.

The real reason his drive came to a halt, however, we know now was lack of ammunition, failure of transport, treason within the cars armies and wretched bureaucratic inefficiency. These handicaps seem to have been removed from the courageous Muscovites, perhaps for all time.

On Aug. 1, 1916, the Russian fought a heavy battle after crossing the Stokhod river, just south of the Pinsk marshes. This was the high water mark of the drive in this sector. Further south they approached on Aug. 2 within 10 miles of Kovel. On Aug. 6, still further south, they crossed the rivers Sereth and Grabarka and wrested six villages from the Austrians. Letchitzky was in command here, and on Aug. 8 he captured two towns and many more villages.

The next day the Austrians before Stanislaus withdrew on a wide front and on Aug. 10 the Russians entered the city.

On Aug. 15 Jablonitz, near an important pass through the Carpathians fell and on Aug. 18 high hopes were stirred in the allied capitals by the news that the Russians were three miles within Hungary.

The Russian drive then ceased, or rather was merged in the disastrous Roumanian campaign.

UNFORTUNATE ROUMANIA.

Roumania declared war on the Teutonic powers Aug. 27 and immediately invaded Transylvania, where the weak Austrian guards were easily pushed back and the important cities of Hermannstadt and Kronstadt were soon in the invaders' hands.

The kaiser sent von Falkenhayn, a splendid strategist just displaced by von Hindenburg, as chief of the great general staff, to command on this front, while von Mackensen headed the Germans, Bulgarians and Turks, who threw themselves on Roumania from the south.

The Roumanians proved no match for the combination of foes. Skillful work by German spies, or the

treachery of certain members of their own army, but the Roumanians' plans of campaign in the Teutons' hands, it is now divulged.

On Sept. 9 the enemy took the Danube port of Turutal and 20,000 prisoners; on September 10 Sibetria fell; on Sept. 30 the Roumanians were routed in Transylvania and fell back through the mountain passes in disorder.

On Oct. 23 the principal Roumanian Black Sea port of Constantza was captured, and two days later Cernavoda, on the Danube, was taken and the defenders blew up the great bridge across the river at this point.

A month later the Teuton drive was in full swing from both north and south. The Roumanians offered little resistance. Bucharest fell Dec. 6, and 10 days later all Wallachia was lost. On Dec. 18 Russian troops took over the whole Roumanian front, and a few weeks later the Teuton advance was checked along the line of the Sereth and Danube rivers.

SOME BATTLE CONTINUES.

In the west, however, Germany was facing a far different problem from the poorly outfitted and trained Roumanian peasants. When the third year of the war opened the battle of the Somme was still going on vigorously, with the French and British showing a constantly growing superiority over the foe. Bit by bit

through the summer and autumn the ground was wrenched from the kaiser's men until the coming of winter smothered the offensive "in mud and blood," and, according to the British commander, Sir Douglas Haig, saved his opponents from an immediate great enforced retirement.

On Sept. 22 it was announced that the French and British had taken 55,800 prisoners in the Somme battle between July 1 and Sept. 18. This total was later considerably increased.

FRENCH WIN AT VERDUN.

At Verdun, too, the Germans suffered. The French in battles of the fall and winter won back most of the ground lost in the offensive of the spring of 1916 and captured more than 15,000 prisoners, with slight losses themselves.

The spring campaign in the west opened this war with the Germans falling back from the great salient spear point directed at Paris—confessing thereby either their weakness or their aversion to a further offensive, although at the time German writers hinted darkly that von Hindenburg "had something up his sleeve."

The "strategic retirement" began about March 17, and the Teutons triumphantly declared it would prevent an allied offensive this year. But they spoke too soon.

On April 9 the British stormed high Vimy ridge, taking on this and succeeding days about 12,000 prisoners. The other enemy stronghold along the British line was Messines ridge, south of Ypres. This the British blew up by mines, June 7, the noise being heard in London. They captured 5,000 prisoners the first day of the offensive and many others later.

FRENCH GAIN HILLS.

Below the sector of the German retirement the French were equally successful. On April 16 they started a great offensive which resulted in the dominating "Ladies' Road" falling into their hands, besides important positions in Champagne. Their prisoners the first two days totaled 17,000. On May 6, along the Aisne, they took 6,100 captives and gained points from which they looked down on the foe, as the British did farther north.

It should be noted here, however, that the French losses were severe, resulting in the replacement of Nivelle as commander-in-chief by Petain.

The last twelvemonth in the Italian campaign has witnessed a series of costly reverses for the Austrians, but the Italians have been prevented from following up their successes by the very difficult terrain, the beaten Teutons falling back after each defeat to new mountain positions most difficult to attack.

ITALIANS TAKE GORIZIA.

On Aug. 8, 1916, the Italians stormed the stubbornly defended Gorizia bridgehead, on the Isonzo river, taking about 10,000 prisoners, and they followed this success by seizing the city of Gorizia and increasing the number of their captives.

The Italians launched a new offensive the first days of November and on Nov. 5 they announced that their prisoners since the fall of Gorizia totaled 49,365.

Winter then stifled operations until May 15, when the Italians returned to the attack in the Carso, aiming at Trieste. On May 18 the haul of Austrian prisoners was announced to be 6,432. The offensive was renewed May 25, 9,000 prisoners being taken the first day. On May 26 Italy stated she had taken 22,414 prisoners since May 15.

The last operations left the Italians in an unfavorable terrain and the Austrians counter attacked successfully, inflicting important losses, but not driving back the invaders to any great extent. The Italians apparently settled down to organize the conquered soil in preparation for a new blow.

In the Balkans the deadlock continues, but what changes there have been have favored the allies. At the west end of the lines the gallant Serbians last winter fought their way back on their own soil, and with the help of other troops took Monastir. King Constantine of Greece gave up the forts of Kavala to the Bulgarians and the Germans took about 20,000 Greek soldiers to Silesia as "guests." For this and other acts favoring the Germans he lost his throne. Greece is now building up a new army of 400,000 men, which will probably soon be fighting for the cause of democracy under the leadership of the great patriot, Venizelos.

The Italians have increased their forces in Albania and built excellent communications through the mountains, forming a junction with Sarra's left and securing this end of the Balkan line.

When the marshes froze there was a sharp Russian offensive last winter near Riga. Otherwise the coast front lay dormant for many months, and during the revolution "fraternizing" was rife between the opposing armies. Then the Russians, having put their house in order, set out to show the kaiser that free men can fight better than slaves.

The sectors selected for attack lay between the Pinsk marshes and the Carpathians, the same for last summer. Successes were scored at several points, the prisoners by July 11 numbering 42,000. The greatest advance was near Stanislaus, from which city Korniloff's men advanced across a series of rivers, capturing Halicz and sabering and bayoneting the beaten Austrians.

TURKS BADLY BEATEN.

The Turks suffered severe defeats in the course of the year at several points. The British splendidly retrieved their reputation in Mesopotamia by recapturing Kut-el-Amara, scene of a long siege, resulting in the capitulation of a large English force to the Turks on Feb. 26 last, and, pursuing the foe up the valley of the Tigris, much as they themselves had been pursued over the same grounds in the opposite direction not many months before. On March 11 they took Bardad. They continued several scores of miles further on and also formed a junction with the Russians northeast of Bardad.

Farther north the Russians held on to their more important gains—the great cities of Erzerum and Trebizond, but abandoned Mush, Armenia and a large but thinly settled region to the foe.

NEAR JERUSALEM.

Moving out from the Suez canal the British inflicted a severe defeat on the Turks near Romani and then fought their way into Palestine, building a new railroad as they went. A further slight advance would bring them before Jerusalem. The Turks apparently are preparing to abandon the Holy City. They have also removed the Jews from the seaport of Jaffa, treating them so cruelly that hundreds have died.

In Germany's sole remaining colony, East Africa, converging columns of British, Portuguese and French are closing in on the remnants of the defending army and the kaiser's overseas dominions seems near eclipse. All military observers expect the war will continue through the next winter and the new campaigns are awaited with special interest because American troops will have a chance to show their mettle on the west front.

EUROPEAN BATTLE LINE CHANGES BY YEARS.

